

REMARKS

The claims in this case pending and under examination are claims 1-23. Claims 1-3 and 5-11 have been allowed. Claims 4 and 12-23 have been amended.

We have prepared amended claims appendix, which are enclosed with this response, and we believe that the claims now will all be allowable. Claim 4 has been amended to remove the indefinite lack of antecedent as well as claim 23. However, claim 23 has been deleted and the substance thereof rewritten in claim 12. By doing so, we believe claim 12 will be allowable since claim 23 in substance is allowable over the prior art if rewritten as indicated by the Examiner on page 8, paragraph 12 of the Office Action. Since claim 12 would be amended to be allowable, all claims dependent thereon should also be allowable.

The claims in this case pending and under examination are claims 1-23. Claims 1-3 and 5-11 have been allowed. Claims 4 and 12-23 have been amended.

The Examiner has allowed claims 1-3 and 5-11. Claim 23 has been indicated to be allowable, as well as claim 4 if they are rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

We have prepared amended claims appendix, which are enclosed with this response, and we believe that the claims now will be allowable. Claim 4 has been amended to remove the indefinite lack of antecedent as well as claim 23. However, claim 23 has been deleted and the substance thereof rewritten in claim 12. By doing so, we believe claim 12 will be allowable since claim 23 in substance is allowable over the prior art if rewritten as indicated by the Examiner on page 8, paragraph 12 of the Office Action. Since claim 12 would be amended to be allowable, all claims dependent thereon should also be allowable.

Regarding the note on page 2 of the Office Action, paragraph 2, the status of parent application 08/677,119 is now U.S. Patent No. 6,454,892 of September 24, 2002. The cross-reference at the first line of the specification has been amended to reference the correct status.

Regarding the notation regarding French Patent No. 671659, the second reference under "other documents", apparently is identical in substance to French Patent No. 671659 and the

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crossing off the initials of the Examiner under other documents does not change the fact that the Examiner did in fact note having seen French Patent No. 671659.

Since it is believed that the claims are now allowable over the art of record, there is no need to discuss the art of record.

In view of the foregoing amendments and argument, reconsideration of the rejection of claims 4 and 12-23 is respectfully urged. Accordingly, allowance of all claims now pending is respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner wish to contact Applicants' representative, he may do so by telephoning Edward H. Valance, Reg. No. 19,896, at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington Metropolitan area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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